

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 250646Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6642
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PINS, PDEV, SU
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SUBJ: SUDAN FOREIGN POLICY IMPERATIVES

SUMMARY:

NIMEIRI'S RECENT EFFORTS IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH
ETHIOPIA AND LIBYA AND HIS ATTEMPTS MEDIATE BETWEEN
CHAD AND LIBYA AND BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA PROBABLY

ARE CAUSING CONCERN IN CAIRO AND ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, WE SEE NO RPT NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN SUDANESE FOREIGN POLICY. RATHER NIMEIRI, WHO REMAINS DISTRUSTFUL OF MENGISTU AND QADDHAFI, HAS MADE TACTICAL MOVES TO NEUTRALIZE THREATS FROM OR WITHIN LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA. HIS BASIC ANAGONISM TOWARD USSR REMAINS AS DOES HIS NEED FOR FRIENDSHIP AND ASSISTANCE OF MODERATE ARABS, EUROPEANS AND US. END SUMMARY

1. WITH ALL THAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN AND AROUND SUDAN IT MAY BE WORTHWHILE TO STOP A MOMENT AND CONSIDER BASIC ELEMENTS PROPELLING SUDANESE FOREIGN POLICY. THIS WILL BE OF INCREASING SIGNIFICANCE AS NIMEIRI PREPARES TO ACT AS OAU PRESIDENT DURING 1978/79 TERM, A PROCESS THAT ALREADY HAS BEGUN. MOREOVER, IT APPEARS THAT NIMEIRI EXPECTS TO BE ACTIVE IN THAT ROLE.
 2. IT IS AXIOMATIC THAT SUDAN SEEKS GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS MANY NEIGHBORS AND THAT IT FOLLOWS GENERAL ARAB, AFRICAN, THIRD WORLD LINE ON MOST ISSUES. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT NIMEIRI'S VIEWS ARE FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES WHAT IS IMPORTANT, ALTHOUGH HIS VIEWS SEEM TO BE WIDELY IF NOT COMPLETELY SHARED WITHIN SUDAN.
 3. NIMEIRI HAS TWO FUNDAMENTAL TASKS BEFORE HIM: TO KNIT HIS VAST, DIVERSE COUNTRY INTO ONE STABLE NATION AND TO DEVELOP ITS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL SO THAT SUDAN CAN EMERGE AT LAST FROM AMONG THE WORLD'S POOREST
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AND LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES HE HAS SOUGHT CLOSE RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER MODERATE ARAB STATES, AND HE HAS MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF US AND WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

4. DURING THE LATTER HALF OF 1976 AND MOST OF 1977 NIMEIRI WAS ACTIVELY HOSTILE TOWARD LIBYA, ETHIOPIA AND THE USSR. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT SHIFTS IN HIS APPROACH TO THE FIRST TWO COUNTRIES. WE THINK NIMEIRI BELIEVES THAT HE HAS DISCOVERED THAT ACCOMMODATION IS A MORE USEFUL DEVICE AGAINST OPPONENTS THAN HEAD-ON CONFRONTATION. ONE OF HIS FIRST MOVES AS PRESIDENT WAS TO BRING THE CIVIL WAR IN SOUTH TO A CLOSE. LAST SUMMER HE MADE BOLD ATTEMPT TO RISE ABOVE HIS OWN RHETORIC AND ANGER AND TO REASON TOGETHER WITH OPPOSITION LEADER SADIQ AL-MAHDI. HE WAS QUICK TO SUPPORT THIS SORT OF APPROACH BY SADAT WITH THE ISRAELIS.

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5. NOW NIMEIRI SPEARS TO BE APPLYING THIS TECHNIQUE
IN FOREIGN POLICY. HE HAS MOVED TO IMPROVE
RELATIONS WITH LIBYA AND HAS EVEN TRIED TO GET LIBYA AND
CHAD TO BEHAVE THIS WAY TOWARDS EACH OTHER. THIS PHILOS-
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OPHY HAS BEEN BEHIND HIS APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS
TO MEDIATE BETWEEN CHADGOV AND CHADI REBELS AND HIS
SIGNIFICANTLY LESS SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN
EPMG AND ERITREANS. NIMEIRI IS TRYING TO IMPROVE

RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AND HAS OFFERED HIS GOOD OFFICES IN ANY ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI TALKS THAT MAY DEVELOP.

6. SO FAR, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT NIMEIRI IS PREPARED BOLDLY TO MAKE HIS PEACE WITH THE SOVIETS. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT COMPLETELY DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MAY DO SO. CLEARLY, HE IS PREPARED TO MAKE SHARP POLICY TURNS. NONETHELESS, WE THINK THIS IS UNLIKELY. IN EVERY CASE WHERE NIMEIRI HAS SOUGHT ACCOMMODATION, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE SEES AN IMPORTANT SECURITY BENEFIT TO SUDAN. HIS ACCOMMODATION WITH DOMESTIC OPPONENTS EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALIZED AND WEAKENED THEM THEREBY ENHANCING THE STABILITY OF NIMEIRI'S REGIME. NIMEIRI'S REFUSION WITH MENGISTU AND HIS DISDAIN FOR QADDHAFI HAVE NOT CHANGED. HOWEVER, HE HOPES TO WEAN BACK ARMED SUDANESE ANSAR REBELS BY IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THESE COUNTRIES. ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT US POLICIES TOWARD HORN, NIMEIRI HAS JUDGED THAT CONTINUED WAR IN OGADEN IS FUTILE AND RATHER THAN FIGHT TO LAST DROP OF BLOOD, PARTIES SHOULD SEEK COMPROMISE.

7. NIMEIRI WISHES TO SEE MODERATE, STABLE COUNTRIES ALONG HIS BORDERS, ESPECIALLY IN ETHIOPIA AND CHAD WHERE PROBLEMS PRESENTLY ARE MOST ACUTE. AS CONCERNED AS HE MAY BE OVER MENGISTU AND QADDHAFI, IT IS SOVIETS HE MOST WORRIED ABOUT. HE BELIEVES SOVIETS WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE ADVANCES AS LONG AS SUCH COUNTRIES ARE UNSTABLE. HE ASSUMES THAT ULTIMATE SOVIET OBJECTIVE IS TO DOMINATE AFRICA AND ARAB OIL COUNTRIES. KEY TO THIS

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IS CONTROL OF NILE VALLEY, WITH DETESTED NIMEIRI AND SADAT TO BE DEPOSED IN PROCESS THEREBY AVENGING SOVIET HONOR.

8. THEREFORE, WE DO NOT RPT NOT SEE NIMEIRI'S OVERTURES TO LIBYA OR ETHIOPIA AS INHERENTLY CONTRADICTORY EITHER TO HIS BASIC HOSTILITY TOWARD THE SOVIETS OR TO IS FRIENDSHIP TOWARD MODERATE ARABS, EUROPEANS OR US. RATHER, THESE ARE TACTICAL MOVES AIMED AT REMOVING SELECTED THREATS TO SUDAN'S SECURITY, AND NIMEIRI JUDGES THIS TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECTIVES. HIS PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIETS ARE MORE FUNDAMENTAL AND ALSO MORE DEEPLY PERSONAL (THEY TRIED TO GET RID OF HIM IN 1971). AS FOR HIS TIES WITH THE MODERATE ARABS, THE EUROPEANS AND THE US, THEY ARE OF A VERY DIFFERENT CHARACTER AND QUALITY, FOR THESE COUNTRIES RATHER THAN POSING A NEGATIVE THREAT WHICH MUST BE NEUTRALIZED OFFER THE POSITIVE ASSISTANCE THAT IS ESSENTIAL IF NIMEIRI IS TO DO THE PRACTICAL TASKS THAT WILL INDEED TURN SUDAN INTO A MODERN, STABLE, PROSPEROUS

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